Misuse of Representational Grants by Diplomats

3010. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the gross misuse of 'representational grants' being given to the Indian diplomats;

(b) if so, how many such cases have been noticed during the last three yeas and the amount involved and its percentage vis-a-vis entire grant; and

(c) whether any accountability has been fixed and the measures taken to avoid recurrence of such cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) There is no information to suggest that there is misuse of funds allocated for representational purposes to Indian diplomats. The disbursement of representational grant to diplomats serving in Indian Missions abroad is governed by clearly defined rules and regulations. Details of expenditure incurred are subject to scrutiny by the Head of Mission concerned, in each individual case, and by the Ministry of External Affairs. The enforcement of scrutiny of such expenditure is designed to prevent any misuse of representational grants allocated to officers in Indian Missions abroad. Every officer drawing representational grant is accountable to Government for rendering a detailed account of the expenditure he/she incurs for representational purposes, in conformity with the norms that govern such expenditure.

Pakistani support to terrorism

3011. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the Third Week of February, 2003, India has briefed the Secretary-General of Commonwealth, about Pakistan's continued support to terrorism;

(b) if so, the steps that Government are taking to keep Pakistan out of Commonwealth; and

(c) the steps taken so far or proposed to be taken to declare Pakistan a terrorist State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Commonwealth Secretary-General Mr. Don McKinnon visited India from 15-17 February 2003, as part of consultations with key Commonwealth countries in the run-up to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Abuja later this year. The Commonwealth Secretary-General was fully briefed about our concerns regarding Pakistan's continued support to terrorism.

(b) The unanimous decision to suspend Pakistan from the Council of the Commonwealth was taken after the military coup in October 1999, which was in violation of fundamental Commonwealth principles of democracy, good governance and rule of law. In view of the constitutional and other changes introduced in Pakistan before the elections, moving Pakistan towards institutionalised military rule, this decision was maintained by consensus by the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group in its meeting in London from 31 October to 1 November 2002. India will continue to strongly articulate its concerns on this issue within the Commonwealth.

(c) The Government has sensitised its key interlocutors that Pakistan has become the epicentre of terrorism. Many countries have expressed concern over Pakistan's failure to live up to its commitments made on 12th January, 27th May and 6th June, 2002, to end cross-border terrorism on a permanent basis and have called upon Pakistan to dismantle the infrastructure of support to terrorism.

Cancellation of visit of Bill Clinton

3012. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the former U.S. President Bill Clinton had to cancel his visit to India scheduled for February this year because of the security concerns raised by the U.S. secret service;

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto; and